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M. ARTIME

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Q. SAN ROMAN



Report on State of Cuba

By VIRGINIA PREWITT

The leaders of the Cuban Invasion Brigade have begun to talk. At a dinner and press conference at New York's Overseas Press Club Friday, they delivered their message, brought back from the death of the invasion beach and the hell of Castro's prisons.

Commander Manuel Artime expressed it thus to a full house of journalists:

"If communism holds Cuba, it will take Latin America. And if communism takes Latin America, it will reach into your own territory. Then there will be no freedom of expression and of thought in the United States."

OVER THERE

This is a grave warning. It has been implicit, but as yet unsaid in the flood of words over Cuba. It was said in a different way but just as surely by Khrushchev and East Germany's Walter Ulbricht at recent communist conclaves.

Commander Artime reminded the press audience of this:

"On July 21, 1960," he said, "I told this club that Castro's Cuba was a communist beachhead threatening the Americas. Very few recognized it at that time. Much has happened since then," he said. "Now I'm back again, 45 pounds lighter, to tell you the same thing. And I appeal to all American journalists to combat communism with truth, a battle as hard as our own soldier's role."

Asked whether or not the Brigade had been promised U. S. air cover on Giron Beach, Commander Jose San Roman said, "That's history. We're interested in freeing Cuba in the future."

Commander Artime was asked to say what kind of Cuba he envisaged.

"We want a Cuba governed by a modern democracy, with freedom and social justice. Like the U. S. or Western Germany. We can never go back to what we had before—neither to dictatorship nor to so-called democracy that masked corruption."

CURSE

"Cuba's curse" has been one-man rule," Artime said.

A reporter recalled how Sr. Artime while in prison had been attacked by some U. S. journalists—who called him "reactionary" and "rightist."

The attacks arose from lack of comprehension," answered Sr. Artime. "When the communist prison guards showed us those articles, I wept. But I think comprehension has improved now."

"I avoid hatred because hatred is a communist characteristic," he continued. "I invite those who called us names to join us now in the effort to free Cuba."

The invasion commanders maintain that:

- The Brigade is a symbol and a rallying point for hemisphere-wide opposition to Castro.

- Castro is supported today "by only 25% of the Cuban people — and 30,000 Russian soldiers."

- The Cuban exiles are united in purpose despite reported differences. The differences, over details and personalities, are "at the top."